

Message Text

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SUBJECT: COLOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON HELSINKI SITES

KALASTAJATORPPA - THE FISHERMAN'S HUT

LONG AGO - NO ONE KNOWS THE EXACT TIME - A FISHERMAN LIVED
IN HIS HUT IN A SHELTERED BAY. IT WAS A LOVELY PLACE ON A
PENINSULA NEAR THE CAPITAL. THE SETTING SUN REDDENED THE
WAVES AS THE FISHERMAN WORKED OVER HIS NETS ON THE SHORE.
NO ONE KNOWS WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FISHERMAN. HE PROBABLY
LIVED HIS LIFE QUIETLY, DIED JUST AS QUIETLY. BUT HIS NAME
LIVED ON, SINCE ON THAT LOVELY SPOT A SLIGHTLY LARGER
CABIN WAS BUILT WHICH THEN BECAME A COFFEE HOUSE.
AND THE COFFEE HOUSE WAS CALLED THE KALASTAJATORPPA -
FISHERMAN'S HUT - IN MEMORY OF THE MAN WHO HAD FIRST FOUND
THAT CHARMING STRETCH OF BEACH. THE COFFEE HOUSE WAS
PAINTED RED AND BECAME A POPULAR PLACE WITH PEOPLE OF
HELSINKI ON THEIR SUNDAY WALKS. LATER THEY CAME FOR THEIR
SUNDAY COFFEE BY TRAM. THE RED CABIN SURVIVED UNTIL THE
1930'S, AND IN 1937 A PROPER RESTAURANT WAS OPENED.
ITS PLANNERS REALIZED THE POTENTIAL OF THE LOVELY SEASHORE
AND BUILT THE RESTAURANT IN NATIONAL ROMANTIC STYLE. EVEN
LATER ON, WHEN THE RESTAURANT WAS ENLARGED AND THE HOTEL
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BUILT, THE IDYLIC ENVIRONMENT

WAS PRESERVED. MOST OF THE HOTEL ROOMS AND THE
RESTAURANTS HAVE A VIEW OVER THE PEACEFUL BAY, WHICH
IS BORDERED BY SHADY, OLD TREES. THE PENINSULA IS

CROSSED BY GOOD PATHS, AND THE TENNIS COURT IS RIGHT NEARBY. THE SEURASAARI OPEN-AIR MUSEUM, TARVASPAA ATELIER MUSEUM AND MEILAHTI ART MUSEUM ARE ALL WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE. TRAM NUMBER 4 TAKES YOU FROM THE HOTEL TO THE CENTER OF TOWN IN ABOUT 20 MINUTES.

THE PRESIDENT'S PALACE

THE PRESIDENT'S PALACE OVERLOOKING THE SOUTH HARBOR IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF SCANDINAVIAN MODESTY IN MATTERS OF OFFICIAL POMP. ONLY IRON RAILINGS, A POLICEMAN IN FRONT OF THE GATE AND TWO GUARDSMEN AT THE DOOR GIVE AWAY THAT THIS IS THE EMBODIMENT OF THE MIGHT OF THE REPUBLIC. THE THREE-STORY 'PALACE' WAS ORIGINALLY THE STATELY HOME OF A WEALTHY MERCHANT FAMILY IN HELSINKI. THE FINNISH SENATE BOUGHT IT IN 1837 TO BE THE RESIDENCE OF THE GRAND DUKE OF RUSSIA. THE CONVERSION PLANS WERE MADE BY C.L. ENGEL, THE ARCHITECT OF HELSINKI'S EMPIRE CENTER, AND THE BEST FINNISH CRAFTSMANSHIP WAS HIRED TO REDECORATE THE RESIDENCE. EVEN THOUGH THE PALACE MAY NOW IMPRESS ONE AS SOMETHING REMOTELY CZARIST, IT WAS REGARDED AS THE FLOWER OF FINNISH TASTE AND SKILL IN THE HUNDRED-YEAR PERIOD WHEN FINLAND WAS AUTONOMOUS GRAND DUCHY OF RUSSIA. THE CZAR, HOWEVER, PREFERRED TO LIVE IN ST. PETERSBURG AND ONLY BRIEFLY VISITED HELSINKI. IN 1919, TWO YEARS AFTER FINLAND HAD GAINED HER INDEPENDENCE, THE FIRST FINNISH PRESIDENT MOVED INTO THE PALACE. ALL FINNISH PRESIDENTS HAVE USED IT AS THEIR OFFICIAL RESIDENCE, BUT PRESIDENT KEKKONEN LIKES TO SPEND MOST OF HIS TIME AT TAMMINIEMI WHICH IS LOCATED IN A LESS NOISY AREA IN A LOVELY PARK NEAR THE SEURASAARI OPEN-AIR MUSEUM, EXCELLENT SKIING TERRAIN FOR HIM. THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE PALACE HOUSES THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICES, STAFF QUARTERS AND THE KITCHEN. THE FIRST FLOOR IS MAINLY FOR REPRESENTATION, WITH GRAND HALL BASED ON THE MODEL OF THE WINTER PALACE IN ST. PETERSBURG. THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICIAL STUDY IS ALSO LOCATED ON THE FIRST FLOOR. IT HAS BEEN REDECORATED A FEW TIMES, BUT THE LAMP ON THE PRESIDENT'S DESK HAS REMAINED THE SAME ALL THROUGH THE HISTORY OF THE PALACE. THE SECOND FLOOR IS RESERVED FOR THE PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE USE. THE PALACE HAS BEEN REPAIRED OR RENOVATED EIGHT TIMES SINCE IT WAS BUILT IN 1813-15. THE LAST UNCLASSIFIED

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EXTENSIVE REPAIR PHASE WAS COMPLETED IN 1974. SEVERAL HEADS OF STATE HAVE SLEPT IN THE PALACE DURING THEIR VISITS. WHEN KING GUSTAV V OF SWEDEN CAME TO FINLAND, THE FORMER CZARIST BED HAD TO BE LENGTHENED BY ABOUT 20 INCHES. THE MARKET PLACE IN FRONT OF THE PRESIDENT'S PALACE IS SOMETHING NO TOURIST SHOULD - OR COULD- MISS. A BAFFLING COMBINATION OF COLORS AND SMELLS, IT SPRAWLS AROUND TWO STATUES, THE MONUMENT COMMEMORATING THE VISIT OF EMPRESS ALEXANDRIA, AND THE ROBUST HAVIS AMANDA, VILLE VALGREN'S LOVELY DAUGHTER OF THE SEA. THE MARKET PLACE IS WHERE YOU GET THE BEST VEGETABLES, FRUIT AND BERRIES. TO GET A FEELING OF SUMMER IN HELSINKI, END YOUR TOUR IN THE FINNISH STYLE: BUY A BOXFUL OF JUICY STRAWBERRIES AND ENJOY THEM AT THE FEET OF THE BASHFUL AMANDA, SURROUNDED BY A WHOLE FRAGRANT SEA OF

FLOWERS. YOU CAN ALSO GET GOOD, HOT COFFEE AT THE MARKET PLACE, SERVED IN MUGS AND ACCOMPANIED BY PASTRIES IF YOU LIKE. DON'T BE MISLED BY THE UNPRETENTIOUS APPEARANCE OF THE STALL: VICE PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON ONCE SIPPED HIS AFTERNOON COFFEE ON THE SAME BENCH, AND PRESIDENT KEKKONEN LIKES TO DROP IN FROM TIME TO TIME. SATURDAY, THE DAY WHEN ALL FINNS DO THEIR WEEKEND SHOPPING, IS BEST FOR VISITING THE MARKET PLACE. IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL STALLS; THE SQUARE IS THROGGED WITH VENDORS OLD AND YOUNG OFFERING HOMEMADE HONEY AND JAM, SPICES AND HERBS, FLOWERS AND SOUVENIRS - AND WORKS FOR THE COMPLETE ANGLER. BEWARE OF THE SEAGULLS AROUND THE FISH STALLS: SOMETIMES THEY SIMPLY AMAZE ONE WITH THEIR ACCURACY OF AIM.

THE BRICK BUILDING A LITTLE FURTHER ON IS THE KAUPPAHALLI - THE MARKET HALL WHERE YOU CAN GET EXCELLENT MEAT, COLD CUTS AND THE BEST BREAD IN ALL OF HELSINKI. EVEN THOSE WHO INSIST ON GETTING THEIR FOOD WRAPPED IN PLASTIC SHOULD TRY AT LEAST THAT GOOD, WHOLESOME BLACK BREAD FINLAND IS FAMOUS FOR: THE SPECIALTIES VARY FROM TASTY "AFTER-OVEN" BREAD AND FLAT ROUND BREADS WITH A HOLE IN THE CENTER TO ALL SORTS OF CRISPS AND RUSKS. DON'T MISS THE KARELIAN PASTY, EITHER: IT IS A HANDY PORTABLE LUNCH ALTHOUGH BEST WHEN HOT FROM THE OVEN. THE MARKET PLACE IS OPEN ON WEEKDAYS FROM 7 AM TO 2 PM. THERE IS FERRY SERVICE TO THE SUOMENLINNA FORTRESS OFF THE COAST FROM THE MARKET PLACE, AND SIGHTSEEING BY BOAT IS ALSO AVAILABLE.

FINLANDIA HALL

FINLANDIA HALL - HELSINKI'S CONCERT AND CONGRESS CENTER - IS UNCLASSIFIED

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USED ALL YEAR ROUND FOR CONCERTS, CONGRESSES AND OTHER CONFERENCES. IT IS THE HEADQUARTERS OF HELSINKI MUSIC LIFE AND THE HUB AROUND WHICH THE ANNUAL HELSINKI RESTIVAL REVOLVES. FINLANDIA HALL HAS BEEN CALLED EUROPE'S MOST BEAUTIFUL CONCERT HALL. THE HALL IS ALSO A FORUM FOR BIG INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL CONGRESSES. IT PROVIDES THE SPACE AND ADVANCED TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT FOR MEETINGS OF ANYTHING FROM 10 TO 2,000 PEOPLE. THERE IS A SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION SYSTEM FOR SIX LANGUAGES. FINLANDIA HALL WAS BOOKED FOR 60 CONGRESSES AND CONFERENCES IN ITS VERY FIRST YEAR, 1972. THE BUILDING HAS A LARGE AUDITORIUM FOR OVER 1,700 PERSONS AND A CONFERENCE ROOM FOR 350. THERE ARE THREE AUDITORIA TAKING A HUNDRED PEOPLE AND 20 COMMITTEE AND SECRETARIAT ROOMS OF VARYING SIZES. THE THREE FOYERS ARE AMONG THE LARGEST AND LOVELIEST IN EUROPE. EACH HAS COUNTERS FOR REFRESHMENTS. THERE IS A 400-SEAT RESTAURANT AND AN OUTSIDE PARKING AREA FOR 300 CARS. FINLANDIA HALL WAS DESIGNED BY ALVAR AALTO, ONE OF THE WORLD'S TOP ARCHITECTS. IT IS OWNED AND RUN BY THE CITY OF HELSINKI. THE EXTERIOR IS MARKED BY THE FREE YET SUBTLY DISCIPLINED FORM AND THE WHITE MARBLE TO WHICH BLACK GRANITE FACINGS ADD A CONTRASTING EFFECT. THE MAIN VOLUME IS DIVIDED INTO FOUR STORIES ABOVE WHICH SOARS THE SLANTING CUPOLA OF THE MAIN AUDITORIUM.

THE ANNEX AT THE SOUTHEND OF FINLANDIA HALL, COMPLETED IN 1975, SERVES CONGRESS PURPOSES ONLY. IT HAS TWO 350-SEAT AUDITORIA THAT CAN BE COMBINED, SECRETARIAL OFFICES AND A PRESS CENTER. THE ANNEX HAS ALSO BEEN DESIGNED BY ALVAR AALTO AND IS FACED IN WHITE MARBLE. FINLANDIA HALL IS LOCATED ON MANNERHEIMINTIE, HELSINKI'S MAIN ARTERY, IN THE VERY HEART OF THE CITY. PARLIAMENT HOUSE, MAIN RAILWAY STATION, AIR TERMINAL, MAIN POST OFFICE, NATIONAL MUSEUM AND SEVERAL OF HELSINKI'S LEADING HOTELS ARE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE.

THE AMERICAN EMBASSY

THE RED-BRICK BUILDING OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN HELSINKI IS SITUATED IN THE LUSH SUBURB OF KAIVOPUISTO NEAR THE SEA WHERE PARKS AND GREENERY AND OCCASIONAL VILLAS REMIND OF THE OLD GRACIOUSNESS OF THE VILLA SUBURB WHICH NOW HOUSES MOST FOREIGN EMBASSIES. THE ROOTS OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN KAIVOPUISTO ARE NOT, HOWEVER, LONG. CONGRESSIONAL COMPLAINTS WERE NEEDED TO FIND A SUITABLE AND FITTING PLACE FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE U.S.

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GOVERNMENT IN HELSINKI. FOR INSTANCE CONGRESSMAN FRANK E. HOOK OF MICHIGAN HAD TO RISE IN THE CONGRESS IN 1935 TO COMPLAIN: "I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE AMERICAN MINISTER TO FINLAND HAS TO HOUSE HIS OFFICE IN HELSINKI ABOVE A DEPARTMENT STORE. MANY COMPLAINTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN UTTERED THAT THE FACILITIES OF OUR MINISTER ARE NOT ONLY HOPELESSLY INADEQUATE AND INSATISFACTORY, BUT A SHAME TO THE UNITED STATES."

THE CONGRESS APPROVED AN APPROPRIATION FOR A NEW EMBASSY BUILDING, AND A LOT WAS BOUGHT IN KAIVOPUISTO FROM THE ESTATE OF ONE HILMA LINDBERG WHO USED TO RUN A BOARDING HOUSE IN AN OLD WOODEN VILLA DATING FROM THE 1870'S. THE EMBASSY BUILDING WAS DESIGNED BY THE SO-CALLED BRISTOL GROUP, AND ARCHITECT HARRIE LINDBERG ARRIVED FROM THE UNITED STATES TO SUPERVISE THE CONSTRUCTION WORK. IN 1947, THE AMERICAN EMBASSY BOUGHT ADJOINING LAND, AND IN THE SAME YEAR, THE STATE OF FINLAND GAVE THE EMBASSY ANOTHER LOT AS A PART PAYMENT FOR A LOAN. WHEN THE NEW EMBASSY BUILDING WAS GOING UP, KAIVOPUISTO WAS STILL A QUIET RESIDENTIAL AREA, WHERE PEOPLE USED TO SIT IN THEIR GARDENS SIPPING COFFEE AND CHILDREN PLAYING AT THE GATES NOW AND THEN CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF MARSHAL CARL-GUSTAV MANNERHEIM, FINLAND'S WAR-TIME COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND PRESIDENT, TAKING HIS DAILY WALK. DURING ITS SHORT HISTORY IN KAIVOPUISTO, THE AMERICAN EMBASSY HAS EXPERIENCED SEVERAL CHANGES OF ADDRESS; WHAT WAS ONCE ITA-KAIVOPUISTO 10 AND ITAINEN PUISTOTIE 21 (EASTERN PARK ROAD) IS NOW ITAINEN PUISTOTIE 14. AUSTAD

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